

Allama Mashriqi's Historic Car: A Symbol of a National Heritage in Ruin

By Nasim Yousaf
(Allama Mashriqi's grandson)



Photos: pakwheels.com

Allama Inayatullah Khan Al-Mashriqi played a pivotal role in bringing freedom to British India. He made countless sacrifices to liberate the nation and endured atrocities both within and outside prison in pursuit of a united India (India was ultimately divided for political reasons). It is a great misfortune for the people of the region, then, that the artifacts of this illustrious leader, who dedicated his life to the people, are now scattered or lay in ruin. The blame for this tragedy falls primarily on the Government of Pakistan, who has failed to collect materials related to Mashriqi since independence in 1947.

A prime example of Mashriqi's destroyed belongings is his old Renault car. Mashriqi had purchased the car while on a trip to Europe in 1926 (the other vehicles he owned were a Hudson and a Willys jeep). I have fond memories from my childhood of playing in these cars as I pretended to be behind the wheel. Today, the Hudson and Willys jeep have been lost and the Renault is on the verge of death. The Renault car is currently in a highly dilapidated state; it lies rotting and rusted in the garage of Mashriqi's house in Icchra (Lahore). This historic car is a *national treasure* and should be treated as such. I am extremely disappointed and saddened that the Government of Pakistan has allowed these belongings to reach this state. Leaders of Mashriqi's stature are born once in centuries and indeed deserve to have their belongings pristinely maintained and displayed in museums.

Mashriqi's car thus needs immediate restoration. Unfortunately, the Government of Pakistan has failed in its duty to preserve this artifact of national importance. Time is now running short before the Renault car is completely consumed by rust. Experts indicate that it can still be restored, provided that the Government of Pakistan takes immediate action.

More importantly, the Renault car is but only one example of the broader problem: that of the Government's inaction with regards to Mashriqi's legacy. Despite Mashriqi's

tremendous sacrifices for the nation and pivotal role in the freedom movement, there has been no effort by the Government to establish a single research institute or other organization to collect *all* of his materials. There remain extensive unpublished documents on Mashriqi and the Khaksar Tehrik at places such as the National Archives of Pakistan, the National Documentation Centre (Islamabad), the National Archives of India, and the India Office Records and Private Papers (administered by the British Library). Furthermore, many of Mashriqi and the Khaksar Tehrik's works (including "Al-Islah" [Lahore, Delhi, Calcutta], "The Radiance" [Aligarh], pamphlets, flyers, memos, photo albums, etc.) are not available in libraries. In addition, Mashriqi's books and speeches still need to be translated from Urdu into other languages. Allama Mashriqi's followers also published papers from multiple locations, including "Al-Mashriqi" (Peshawar), "Piyam-e-Ithad" (Abbottabad), "Jihad" (Calcutta), "Mujahid" (Rangoon), "Akhuwat" (Peshawar), and "Khaksar" monthly (launched in 1939 from Nairobi, Kenya in Urdu, English, and Gujrati). And countless other documents remain scattered or decaying in various locations.

The Government's failure since independence in 1947 to collect materials related to Mashriqi, particularly those depicting Mashriqi's fight against the British Raj, renders a tremendous disservice to the people of the region; future generations would hold it responsible for this gross neglect. Even if Mashriqi had political differences with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah over the partition of India, these should not be used to deprive the nation of the knowledge of his services. In fact, even Indians should recognize that Mashriqi's fight for a united India benefited them as well. *By bringing to light Mashriqi's differences with his contemporaries, the nation can learn from the past.*

In closing, it is time that the Government wakes up and makes a concerted effort to fill this void in the nation's history. It must, without further delay, establish a dedicated museum on Allama Mashriqi to house his articles, artifacts, unpublished manuscripts, and the 1926 Renault (French make). Furthermore, as a grandson of Mashriqi, I demand that the Government setup an Allama Mashriqi Research Institute and Chair on Mashriqi at a major university (preferably Punjab University) to centralize and coordinate the collection of all research materials related to Mashriqi. The people of Pakistan, particularly those in power, must not forget that the freedom they enjoy today is a result of Mashriqi's strenuous fight against the slavery of imperialist rule. Mashriqi is a national hero and the Government must treat his legacy with the same spirit and devotion with which he served his people.

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News from Bangladesh (January 11, 2011)
<http://bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidRecord=345537>

Make Pakistan Better (January 11, 2011)
http://makepakistanbetter.com/why_how_what_forum.asp?GroupID=22&ArticleID=12543

The Pakistani Spectator (January 12, 2011)
<http://www.pakspectator.com/allama-mashriqi%E2%80%99s-historic-car-a-symbol-of-a-national-heritage-in-ruin/>

Kashmir Images, Srinagar (January 14, 2011)
<http://www.dailykashmirimages.com/MostPopular-allama-mashriqi%E2%80%99s-historic-car-a-symbol-of-a-national-heritage-7204.aspx>

The London Post (January 19, 2011)
<http://www.thelondonpost.net/DSQ019JAN201100013.html>

Pakistan Link, USA (January 28, 2011)
<http://pakistanlink.org/Commentary/2011/Jan11/28/04.HTM>

Global Politician, USA (March 01, 2011)
<http://www.globalpolitician.com/26761-al-mashriqi-india-pakistan-britain-independenc>

Asia Times Chicago, USA (March 2011), abbreviated version
<http://www.asiatimeschicago.com>

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For car photos, visit:

<http://www.pakwheels.com/forums/cool-classic-cars-latest/54865-allama-inayatullah-khan-mashriqi-1942-renault>

Note:

The photos of the dilapidated condition of the Renault car can be viewed at the link above (if the link does not work, make sure that the entire text of the link is joined together before clicking on it).